

Interstate 90 Corridor Facilities Study Newsletter

February 2005

La Crosse and Monroe counties

Introduction

This is the first in a series of newsletters to keep interested persons informed about the Interstate 90 (I-90) Corridor Facilities Study in La Crosse and Monroe counties. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has initiated the study to evaluate roadside facilities along the I-90 corridor from the Wisconsin/Minnesota state line at La Crosse to Tomah. A consultant team led by CH2M HILL is assisting WisDOT with the study. Existing roadside facilities include the French Island Welcome Center, the truck scale (safety and weight enforcement facility) near West Salem, and the eastbound and westbound rest areas near Rockland (see map on page 3).

Study purpose

The purpose of the study is to develop a long-range plan for modern roadside facilities in the I-90 corridor that serve the traveling public, enhance freeway operations and safety, and are compatible with local land use plans. The study will evaluate options for improving facilities at their present location and/or developing facilities at new locations. A key feature of the study will be an evaluation of the need for a modern safety and weight enforcement facility to expedite truck weighing/inspection. The 18-month study will conclude in early 2006 with a recommended improvement plan. The project will then proceed to final design and land acquisition. Construction of the first facility is targeted for 2009.

Contact Information

For more information about the I-90 corridor facilities study, contact one of the following study team members:

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Public Meeting Scheduled

The first public information meetings will be held on February 16 and February 17 (see page 3 for details).

Mission Statement:

To provide leadership in the development and operation of a safe and efficient transportation system.



Need for improved facilities

The existing roadside facilities were constructed in the 1960's and 1970's and in some cases do not meet the needs of the traveling public and commercial trucking as they once did. At the French Island Welcome Center, the size of the truck parking stalls, the layout of the truck parking area, and the design of the access roads no longer efficiently serve large semis. In addition, the close spacing of the Welcome Center to the I-90/County B interchange creates potential conflicts between slower moving traffic entering I-90 and faster moving traffic on I-90.

The truck scale near West Salem weighs one truck axle at a time on a static platform scale. This method of weighing is slow and leads to delays for trucks. Occasionally the delays cause the line of waiting trucks to back up onto I-90. The existing truck scale also lacks indoor inspection facilities. Modern truck scales such as the recently constructed facility on I-94 in Kenosha County use "weigh in motion" technology to reduce the time it takes to weigh trucks. Modern scales also have indoor inspection facilities.

The Sparta and Bangor rest areas have limited onsite facilities. Modern rest areas such as the I-94 facilities in Jackson County (Black River Falls area) have more amenities and parking spaces.

What the study includes

Key study activities include the following:

- Data gathering—evaluate existing facilities, existing and future I-90 traffic, safety, truck parking and other user data, local land use and development plans and environmental resources
- Alternatives—document existing deficiencies and future facility needs, develop and screen preliminary alternatives, select a recommended plan
- Environmental studies—assess impacts of reasonable alternatives and prepare an environmental document
- Agency coordination—obtain input from state and federal review agencies
- Community involvement—coordinate with local officials, conduct stakeholder interviews, establish a project advisory committee, hold public information meetings, distribute newsletters/news releases and conduct interest group meetings

Public information meeting set

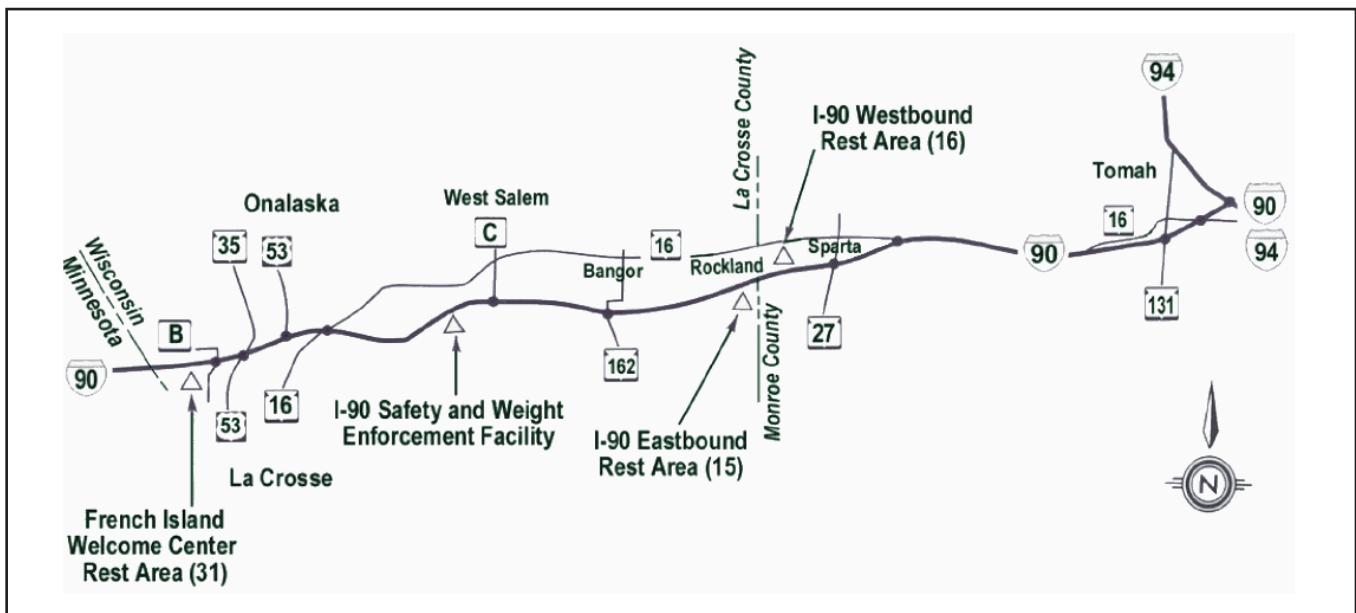
The first public information meeting will be held at two locations. The first session will be on Wednesday, February 16, at the Onalaska City Hall Council Chambers, 415 Main Street, Onalaska. The second session will be on Thursday, February 17, at the Sparta City Hall Council Chambers, 201 West Oak Street, Sparta. The meetings will be conducted as open houses and will run from 4 to 7 p.m. You may stop in any time between those hours to visit with the project team, learn more about the study, review the displays and share your ideas and concerns. There will be additional newsletters and public information meetings as the study progresses.

What's next?

After the first public information meeting, the study team will use public input to assist in developing the initial improvement alternatives. Upcoming study activities will include:

- Conducting a deficiency analysis to document problems with the existing facilities and their access to and from I-90
- Developing and screening the initial range of alternatives
- Coordinating with state and federal review agencies
- Conducting additional meetings with the project's advisory committee
- Holding additional public information meetings

I-90 Corridor Facilities Study Area



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Schedule

